2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 APl Burma
Burmese AP4



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●[996]

In old times the King Mingadeva ruled over the country, and for many years was entirely given up to pleasure and worldly passions, till one day his barber showed him a grey hair—"a flag of the king of death," as it is commonly called in Burmese—which he had found on the royal head. The king was struck with this *memento mori*, and immediately saw yawning before his eyes the abyss of mortality. The vision scared him, and he gave up the gay raiment and idle pleasures of earthly glory and wandered into the desert to end his life as a hermit. His self-denying piety gained for him on his death elevation to the seats of the Byammās, and all the 82,000 princes who succeeded him on the throne of Mèthila followed the example of their ancestor and retired into hermits' cells when they felt their end approaching. Mingadeva, from his blissful superior seat, followed with earnest solicitude the fortunes of his dynasty, and when at length he saw that it was drawing near its close, he returned once more to earth. He was conceived in the womb of the then Queen of Mèthila, and was born of her, and received the name of Prince Nemi. From his earliest years, as the pônnas discerned from his horoscope, his mind was firmly and unwaveringly directed to the prescriptions of religion and to pious observances. Once when he felt a doubt in his mind as to whether the outward giving of alms or inward self-contemplation was the more meritorious, the Tha-gyā King himself came down and instructed him that abundant charity would indeed secure him a new birth in the heavens of Nat-dèwas, but that only the cultivation of the mind could ensure a rise to the blessed regions of the Byammās. The Dèwa King was so attracted by the religious spirit and piety of the young prince that on his return he spoke of it with admiring delight to his subject Nats. Their curiosity was excited by the account of such distinguished qualities in a man, and they begged the Tha-gyā Min to procure for them the acquaintance of so holy a personage. Accordingly the king gave orders to a young Dèwa named Matali to descend to the earth and invite the young prince to a visit to the nat-heavens.

It was the day of the full moon, and all the inhabitants of Mèthila were assembled in the streets and on the pagoda

of their families. The bride and groom are each handed a spray of flowers from the offering bowls and they make obeisance to the guardian spirits of their respective households. With a second spray they make obeisance to their parents and elders. Then a small tray containing fruit and rice is placed before them. The lay elder places a spoonful of this food first to the bridegroom's, then to the bride's lips. As he does this he makes a statement to the effect that this is the auspicious meal and that he hopes blessings may flow from it. 794 585

At this point, a happy and fruitfully married couple from among the oldest people in the community step forward to marry the couple. The left hand of the man is placed on top of the right hand of the girl. Water is poured on their hands thus joined and a silk scarf tied over them as the elderly couple recite words to the effect that they are now united. A chanter arises and intones a song of praise for long life. The contents of the bowl of puffed rice and money are scattered among the audience, and everyone scrambles for them. Now the bride and groom rise and are led to the bridal chamber, across the doorway of which is stretched a golden chain. After the bride has entered, anyone who wishes to do so tries to barricade the doorway and demand money of the groom. He is obliged to pay everyone who makes such demands. This money is known as 'stone money,' from the old custom, still practiced sometimes, of stoning the house of a couple on their wedding night until the bridegroom arises and pays them to desist. This behavior, the taunts and demands that are expressed, has an implied bawdiness about it. Once the couple have entered the bridal chamber, others may go in to inspect it. When all have left the chamber there is a general feast. Usually the feast in Tadagale partakes of the nature of a tea party, since a full scale feast is expensive. Each guest receives a symbolic gift, usually a cigar or a fan.

Old Age. Old age is the period after one's children are grown, the 'third age' of life. Women are definitely regarded as old after the menopause. The Burmese terms for 'old lady' and 'old man' are synonymous with grandparent terms, both in address and reference. Sometimes 'old mother' is used instead of 'old lady.' Long life is considered a great blessing and an indication of merit earned. Long life is prayed for and old age greatly idealized. 886 601 761

The ideal aged person is one who has successfully reared a family, has grandchildren, and a certain amount of material wealth. The aged are expected to be retiring and unobstrusive in their behavior. They should not go out visiting very much; they should eat less and avoid appearing too well dressed or jeweled when attending religious observances. 888

An attitude of resignation characterizes the outlook of the aged person. It is unheard of that old people should work. A possible exception would be a village headman, who, it is felt, should be a person of long experience. When aged people live with their children they assume the role of teachers of their grandchildren. Most of the time of elderly people is spent in activities centering around the pagodas and monasteries, organizing of religious festivals, and raising funds for the monks and charities. They often take leading roles in such activities. 887

The elderly members of a household arise early to see that the rice is cooked for the daily offering to the monks, and to insure that the household altar is properly looked after. It is preferable for them to arise before dawn, for to do so is considered very meritorious.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4



565 house. He came out and asked us in, and we dismounted and went up the stairs into the veranda, and sat down. It was a little house built of wood, with three rooms. Behind was a little kitchen and a stable. The whole may have cost a thousand rupees. As my friend and the Burman talked of their business, I observed the furniture. There was very little; three or four chairs, two tables and a big box were all I could see. Inside, no doubt, were a few beds and more chairs. While we sat the wife and daughter came out and gave us cheroots, and I talked to them in my very limited Burmese till my friend was ready. Then we went away.

565 741 That contractor, so my friend told me as we went home, made probably a profit of six or seven thousand rupees a year. He spent on himself about a thousand of this; the rest went in charity. The great new monastery school, with the marvellous carved façade, just to the south of the town, was his, the new rest-house on the mountain road far up in the hills was his. He supported many monks, he gave largely to the gilding of the pagoda. If a theatrical company came that way, he subscribed freely. Soon he thought he would retire from contracting altogether, for he had enough to live on quietly for the rest of his life.

● [1886]

565 553 His action is no exception, but the rule. You will find that every well-to-do man has built his pagoda or his monastery, and is called 'school-builder' or 'pagoda-builder.' These are the only titles the Burman knows, and they always are given most scrupulously. The builder of a bridge, a well,

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Menopause; MEE YAT THWAY SONE (Woman Disorder-Blood End). Daw Aw Zar reached her climacteric at the age of 50. She did not suffer from menopause symtoms, as she had taken the following preventative measures: she ha eaten boiled duck eggs three at a time, and very frequently. Kyauk-Hpayon fruit jam was eaten all the time ( since 25 ticals of jam can be offered on the altar and can then be eaten to last for 10 days. Phalaung-taung-hmwe root is thinly sliced, mixed with 25 ticals of palm jaggery, 6 pice worth of the 5 kinds of Hsa-mon seeds, and some salt, brewed together and taken. Also, each about two fingers small, were boiled and eaten with rice. Daw Aw Zar ate all these things until the age of 60.

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Smallpox; (Preventatives). The Burmese preventative measure for smallpox consists in rubbing the whole body in horse sweat and drinking mare's milk. The liver of the python is mixed with water and taken internally. Python flesh is also eaten and python skin is buint and the ash mixed with jaggery (palm sugar) and made into pills to be taken orally. This is quite effective, and even if smallpox does come on later, it only does so in a mild form, as in the case of two of U Myaing's children who had only about 15 pustules each. U Myaing applied the preventatives. He tells us that practioners can shift the location of pustules. A pustule about to appear on the eyes of a child can be shifted elsewhere by using the tongue of the mother.

Medical injections-Vaccination and Cholera. Back in Pantanaw the English vaccinator came around only once in about three years, and consequently the children have been vaccinated only once in their lives. This, however is a service which is rendered free of charge. The youngest child has been vaccinated once here. The same remarks hold true for cholera injections also, except that every one in the family including the adults, has had only one inoculation each in their whole lives.

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Cleanliness. For bathing, U Myaing's family uses the hydrant in the camp twice a day. The soap which is used for washing clothes is also used on the body. In Pantanaw the river was used twice a day, and they had special soap for the body. In the camp clothes are washed every day because of their small number. In one month, the family uses up thirty cakes of soap each worth 2 annas, for bathing and washing. Teeth are cared for by cleaning them every morning with either salt or charcoal. This is true both of Pantanaw and refugee camp. It involves no special cost. In Pantanaw, the water used was water from the stream. This water was very clear, but it was also filtered before being used. In the refugee camp here the water is very clear and is used as it comes from the hydrant

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Warts: KATO. The cure for warts is to kill the mother wart by prodding it with some sharp instrument or pinching it away slowly.

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An important factor in the health of the family has been the supernatural. Daw Aw Zar was completely serious in informing us that the reason she was in good health at 72 years of age was that she had been good in a previous existence. This idea is apparently tied to the concept of merit acquisition in which the deeds of the present existence add to or subtract from the well being of the future existence. U Myaing states it in this manner:

"The good in this life is because of the meritorious acts in the previous existence."

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4



groom's bachelor friends take seats to his rear; the matrons of the bride sit directly behind her. 585

Either a Brahmin or a lay elder, arranged for by the bride's mother, officiates. He recites a paean of praise concerning the merits of the bride and groom and the goodness of their families. The bride and groom are each handed a spray of flowers from the offering bowls and they make obeisance to the guardian spirits of their respective households. With a second spray they make obeisance to their parents and elders. Then a small tray containing fruit and rice is placed before them. The person officiating then places a spoonful of this food first to the bridegroom's, then to the bride's lips. As he does this he makes a statement to the effect that this is the auspicious meal and that he hopes blessing may flow from it.

At this point, a happy and fruitfully married couple from among the oldest people in the community step forward to marry the couple. The left hand of the man is placed on top of the right hand of the girl. Water is poured on their hands thus joined and a silk scarf tied over them as the elderly couple recite words to the effect that they are now united. If there is a Brahmin or professional chanter present he arises and intones a chant of praise for long life. The contents of the bowl of puffed rice and silver (or money) are scattered among the audience and everyone scrambles for them. Now the bride and groom rise and are led to the bridal chamber, across the doorway of which is stretched a golden chain. After the bride has entered, anyone who wishes to do so tries to barricade the doorway and demand money of the groom. He is obliged to pay everyone who makes such demands. This money is known as "stone money," from the old custom, still practiced in some cases, of stoning the house of the couple on the wedding night until paid to desist. This behavior, the taunts and demands that are expressed, has an implied bawdiness about it. Once the couple have entered the bridal chamber others have a right to go in to inspect it. When all have left the chamber there is general feasting. In former times wedding feasts were on a large scale, when every guest was given a present. Today, however, the feast partakes more of the nature of a tea party and only a symbolic gift, usually either a cigar or a fan, is given. [431]

*Old Age.* Old age, in Burmese thought, is the period after one's children are grown, the "third age" of life. Women are definitely considered to be in old age after the menopause. The terms in Burmese for "old lady" and "old man" are synonymous with grandparent terms, both in address and reference. Sometimes "old mother" is used for "old lady." 886

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